

Exhibit A to
Response to Office Action

Intel Architecture Software Developer's Manual

Volume 3: System Programming Guide

NOTE: The *Intel Architecture Developer's Manual* consists of three books: *Basic Architecture*, Order Number 243190; *Instruction Set Reference Manual*, Order Number 243191; and the *System Programming Guide*, Order Number 243192.

Please refer to all three volumes when evaluating your design needs.

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TI (table indicator) flag

(Bit 2). Specifies the descriptor table to use: clearing this flag selects the GDT; setting this flag selects the current LDT.

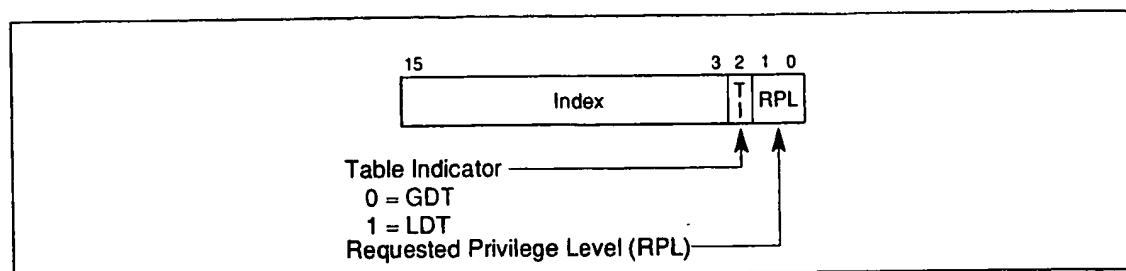


Figure 3-6. Segment Selector

Requested Privilege Level (RPL)

(Bits 0 and 1). Specifies the privilege level of the selector. The privilege level can range from 0 to 3, with 0 being the most privileged level. See Section 4.5., "Privilege Levels", for a description of the relationship of the RPL to the CPL of the executing program (or task) and the descriptor privilege level (DPL) of the descriptor the segment selector points to.

The first entry of the GDT is not used by the processor. A segment selector that points to this entry of the GDT (that is, a segment selector with an index of 0 and the TI flag set to 0) is used as a "null segment selector." The processor does not generate an exception when a segment register (other than the CS or SS registers) is loaded with a null selector. It does, however, generate an exception when a segment register holding a null selector is used to access memory. A null selector can be used to initialize unused segment registers. Loading the CS or SS register with a null segment selector causes a general-protection exception (#GP) to be generated.

Segment selectors are visible to application programs as part of a pointer variable, but the values of selectors are usually assigned or modified by link editors or linking loaders, not application programs.

3.4.2. Segment Registers

To reduce address translation time and coding complexity, the processor provides registers for holding up to 6 segment selectors (see Figure 3-7). Each of these segment registers support a specific kind of memory reference (code, stack, or data). For virtually any kind of program execution to take place, at least the code-segment (CS), data-segment (DS), and stack-segment (SS) registers must be loaded with valid segment selectors. The processor also provides three additional data-segment registers (ES, FS, and GS), which can be used to make additional data segments available to the currently executing program (or task).

For a program to access a segment, the segment selector for the segment must have been loaded in one of the segment registers. So, although a system can define thousands of segments, only 6 can be available for immediate use. Other segments can be made available by loading their segment selectors into these registers during program execution.

: GDT;

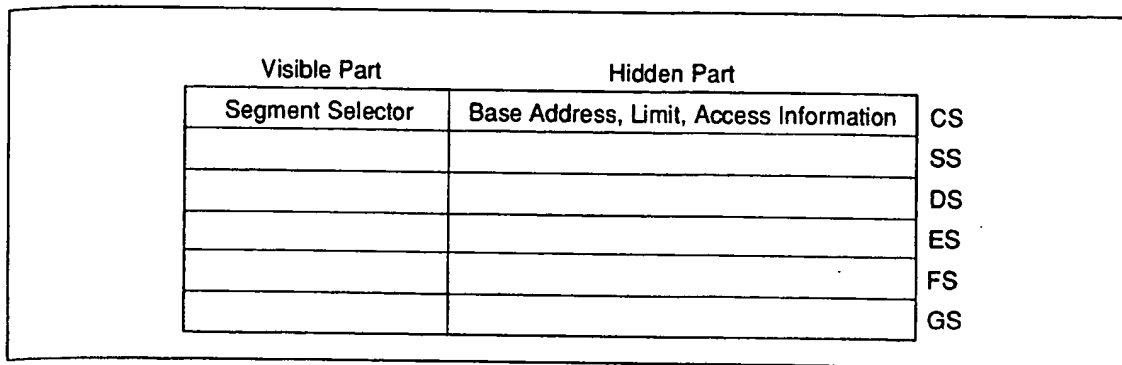


Figure 3-7. Segment Registers

Every segment register has a "visible" part and a "hidden" part. (The hidden part is sometimes referred to as a "descriptor cache" or a "shadow register.") When a segment selector is loaded into the visible part of a segment register, the processor also loads the hidden part of the segment register with the base address, segment limit, and access control information from the segment descriptor pointed to by the segment selector. The information cached in the segment register (visible and hidden) allows the processor to translate addresses without taking extra bus cycles to read the base address and limit from the segment descriptor. In systems in which multiple processors have access to the same descriptor tables, it is the responsibility of software to reload the segment registers when the descriptor tables are modified. If this is not done, an old segment descriptor cached in a segment register might be used after its memory-resident version has been modified.

Two kinds of load instructions are provided for loading the segment registers:

1. Direct load instructions such as the MOV, POP, LDS, LES, LSS, LGS, and LFS instructions. These instructions explicitly reference the segment registers.
2. Implied load instructions such as the far pointer versions of the CALL, JMP, and RET instructions and the IRET, INT_n, INTO and INT3 instructions. These instructions change the contents of the CS register (and sometimes other segment registers) as an incidental part of their operation.

The MOV instruction can also be used to store visible part of a segment register in a general-purpose register.

3.4.3. Segment Descriptors

A segment descriptor is a data structure in a GDT or LDT that provides the processor with the size and location of a segment, as well as access control and status information. Segment descriptors are typically created by compilers, linkers, loaders, or the operating system or executive, but not application programs. Figure 3-8 illustrates the general descriptor format for all types of segment descriptors.

PROTECTED-MODE MEMORY MANAGEMENT

The flags and fields in a segment descriptor are as follows:

Segment limit field

Specifies the size of the segment. The processor puts together the two segment limit fields to form a 20-bit value. The processor interprets the segment limit in one of two ways, depending on the setting of the G (granularity) flag:

- If the granularity flag is clear, the segment size can range from 1 byte to 1 MByte, in byte increments.
- If the granularity flag is set, the segment size can range from 4 KBytes to 4 GBytes, in 4-KByte increments.

The processor uses the segment limit in two different ways, depending on whether the segment is an expand-up or an expand-down segment. See Section 3.4.3.1., "Code- and Data-Segment Descriptor Types", for more information about segment types. For expand-up segments, the offset in a logical address can range from 0 to the segment limit. Offsets greater than the segment limit generate general-protection exceptions (#GP). For expand-down segments, the segment limit has the reverse function; the offset can range from the segment limit to FFFFFFFFH or FFFFH, depending on the setting of the B flag. Offsets less than the segment limit generate general-protection exceptions. Decreasing the value in the segment limit field for an expand-down segment allocates new memory at the bottom of the segment's address space, rather than at the top. Intel Architecture stacks always grow downwards, making this mechanism is convenient for expandable stacks.

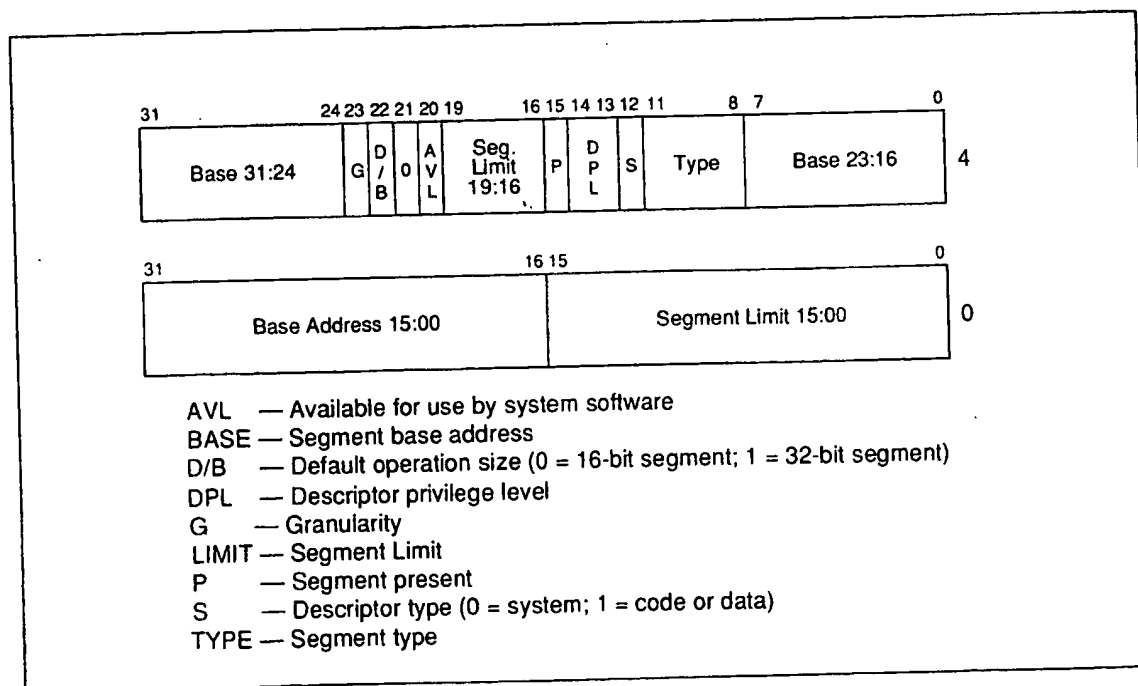


Figure 3-8. Segment Descriptor